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Washington -- On December 10th, 2008, the House passed HR 7321, the Auto Industry Financing and Restructuring Act, by a vote of 237-170. This legislation would have provided funds the domestic automotive industry needs to keep operating for the next three months. This would have been done by modifying existing loans originally intended to increase the fuel efficiency of the industry. The House-passed bill made it clear that business as usual would not be tolerated at the Big Three by requiring the companies to make necessary common sense changes to ensure long term survival. The House legislation contained strict oversight and reform mechanisms. The bill also would have protected taxpayers' investment by including requirements for a prohibition on dividends. Finally, the legislation contained a provision to ban bonuses for the 25 most highly paid employees, prohibitions on golden parachutes, limits on compensation plans, and a required divestment of private aircraft or leases. Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) released the following statement today regarding the Senate's lack of action on the auto industry legislation and news of possible action by the White House: "The Big Three domestic carmakers recently came to Congress to ask for a bridge loan to get them through the toughest economy we've seen since the Great Depression. The domestic auto industry represents three million jobs; this includes direct manufacturing, suppliers, and dealers. Their sales make up nearly 10% of the entire U.S. retail marketplace. Failure of these companies would risk a domino effect which would further damage our already fragile economy.

I supported the bridge loan to the auto industry because I viewed it as a good investment of taxpayer money for America and for working families. Our country cannot allow the heart of our manufacturing base to collapse.

I'm disappointed to report that the Senate was not able to move forward with the legislation. However, as of Friday morning, the White House has opened the door for the possible use of funds for automakers from the \$700 billion economic rescue package. I am hopeful that the president and the Treasury Department act quickly to get funds to the automakers.

With that said, I am also hopeful that the president's administration will require, as the House-passed legislation would have required, the same tough accountability and shared sacrifice by all parties – executives, unions, suppliers, creditors, dealers, bondholders, and shareholders."

